Ann Thieman Barrett (1894-1998) & Tereesa Dagley Padgett (1921-2003) 1984 Oral History Video Interview

Boynton Beach City Library Local History Archives

Biographical note:

Born Ann Thieman (1894-1998), Barrett was raised on a farm in Missouri, she worked as a real estate agent in California before moving to Miami, Florida in 1944. In 1947, she opened Coast Line Realty in Boynton Beach, Florida. Barrett was a significant figure in the development of Boynton Beach. Tereesa Dagley Padgett (1921-2003) arrived in Boynton Beach in 1947 and was the Boynton Beach City Clerk for 30 years (1959-1982) and president of Boynton Woman's Club (1990-1991).

Summary:

Barrett and Padgett interviewed each other on videotape on March 26, 1984. Topics discussed include their early years in Boynton Beach (late-1940s), 1947 hurricane, the history of the Chamber of Commerce, and the growth of the community.

Interview details:

00:00:00 Virginia Ferris, director of the Boynton Beach City Library, introducing Ann Barrett and Teresa Padgett, and explaining that video equipment donated by Soroptimist Club.

00:00:40 About Soroptimist Club

00:02:36 Ann Barrett's personal history, including detail of her early life

00:03:30 Early life in Boynton. Tough time because men didn't like working with a woman. Had office in the Pelton Hotel (112 N. Federal Highway), then lived in Coconut Lane, with secretary and her family

00:04:50 AB's house was destroyed in 1947 hurricane.

00:05:25 Why AB relocated to Boynton. Had lived in Miami, widowed in California, and moved back to Miami in 1929. Worked one year in Red Cross Motor Corp, then became a real estate broker. After working in Miami, her secretary told her about Boynton and they both relocated.

00:06:25 TP says that she lived in Miami about the same time

00:06:50 AB and her secretary bought Ocean Avenue property with hotel together. Gave the buyer's attorney $5,000 each, who then used the money to open a restaurant in the Boynton Beach casino.

00:07:55 What downtown was like – dilapidated, but with charming small stores. No chain stores. Ony store was Palmetto Market.

00:08:55 AB's effort to get first big grocery store in Boynton, (10:10) "Market A"

00:10:40 Woman's Club hub of everything. Theater established.
00:11:30 Seacrest was Green Street.
00:12:00 Encouraged hospital to be built here.
00:12:20 Schoolhouse. TP expresses hope that it would be retained as a historical building.
00:13:10 AB wrote to the Secretary of State to inquire why Boynton didn't have a bank as secretary and treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce. She was able to get the charter for the bank. However, she left town on a trip and came back to find the Boynton Beach State Bank incorporated, the stock was divided, and she was excluded. [Bank charter 11 Dec 1947]
00:14:40 City Hall on Federal Highway
00:15:00 Started the Chamber of Commerce as a desk within the City Hall. Came back from a trip to find that Mayor Purinton had decided that he didn't like the Chamber and had moved it all.
00:16:00 AB's early life, moved from Missouri to Colorado, then to Kansas, then Missouri, then California. Worked in May Company, department store. Visited Hawaii.
00:20:50 First Chamber of Commerce was in City Hall, then the organization started and stopped several times. Charlie Senior (fire chief) and AB restarted. AB donated small lot on Federal Highway for building. Moved to Ocean Avenue. Ann Tindal got Motorola here.
00:24:30 City Hall on Federal Avenue.
00:25:00 Location of churches
00:26:00 Farmer's market, at corner of Boynton Beach Blvd and Federal Highway. Large platform. Moved to Seaboard.
00:27:00 Rainbow Gardens, tourist attraction
00:28:30 James Melton Autorama, became a nightclub
00:29:30 TP's experience during the 1947 hurricane. She had just moved to Boynton in May of 1947, living on farm of brother-in-law John Lamb. Had a baby in September. Flood in October, then power off for three weeks. During that time, her parents visited.
00:34:00 US 1 and 27 competed for traffic from Maine. AB became director of the East Coast Highway Association, worked to get US 1 widened.
00:35:40 AB wanted a newspaper in Boynton, gave room in her office to unnamed young man to start and she and her staff helped get it out.
00:37:45 TP started working for city on 5 July 1952.
00:38:10 Voted at shuffleboard court.
00:39:15 Paul Mercer was mayor after Daley, Mercer had gas station. Mentioned Cassandra Hotel death. Mercer would cash checks at gas station as if he was a bank branch.
00:41:00 TP, living to the west of Boynton, had a phone from Boynton, mailing address in Lake Worth, and banked in Delray.
00:43:00 TP's husband's death. Family history: family moved to Florida in 1925, at end of boom.
00:45:00 TP's experiences with hurricane in 1926. Personal history, including living in Fort Pierce, Daytona Beach, Melbourne, work history. Came to Boynton after WWII, on farm, then in town.
00:50:20 TP got job at City Hall as a temporary worker in 1959, stayed for 30 years. City Hall at that time was very small and employees were very close.
00:54:00 City employee dinners.
00:55:10 Mayors in late 1940s.
00:56:35 Population 2,543 in 1950; 10,467 in 1960. 18,000 in 1970; 35,000 in 1980.

00:57:20 AB on education, left school at 8th grade, but received education through travel.
01:00:05 TP thinks that children have life too easy, they should have to work for their education.
01:01:05 AB had a great childhood. TP has never seen snow except for small dribbles here.

Technical note:

- Finding aid created June 2020 by Georgen Charnes.
- 1 digital file: abarrett3-tpadgett1.mp4 (1 hour, 4 minutes, and 15 seconds)

Keywords:

- Boynton Beach (Fla.)—History

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